THE MINISTER OF ENERGY AND THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI VASANT SATHE): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The cost per telephone depends on the size of the network. It will vary between Rs. 50,000 per line to Rs. 1 lakh per line depending upon the size of the system.

(c) No, Sir. This will be taken care of with proposed tariff.

Linking of Villages to the National Telephone Network

3416. SHRI ROSHAN LAL: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) how many villages in the country have been linked to the National Telephone Network till 31st January, 1988;

(b) how many more villages are expected to be linked during the current plan;

(c) what is the estimated average cost in rupees and foreign exchange for connecting each village; including cost of Copper cables to be provided; and

(d) what technical options are available to Government in order to minimise the costs?

THE MINISTER OF ENERGY AND THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI VASANT SATHE): (a) Presently the Department provides telephone facility in rural areas not on village basis, but on hexagonal basis. The country has been divided into haxagons of 5 Km sides each. Each hexagon covers an area of about 65 sq. km. Telephone facility is provided on fully subsidised basis at the principal village in each hexagon. Out of 50280 inhabited hexagons in the country, 26457 have been provided with telecom facility as on 31-1-1988. The number of villages covered will be much more than this number. All these villages provided with the telecom facility are linked to the National Telephone Network.

(b) More than 4800 hexagons are expected to be provided with telecom facility during the remaining period of the current plan.

(c) Average cost for providing a Long Distanc Public Telephone in a village works out to about Rs. 1.6 lakhs.

(d) Technical options under consideration for minimising the costs are:

(i) Line sharing system.

(ii) Multi access rural radio system.

(iii) Cellular Radio Telephone system.

Production of Biogas

3417. SHRI SHANKER SINH VAGHELA: Will the Minister of ENERGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether any State-wise evaluation of biogas production has been conducted; if so, what are the details thereof;

(b) whether it is a fact that biogas is going waste as per study conducted in Goa as reported in the 'Times of India' dated 26th October, 1987 and if so, what corrective steps have been taken;

(c) what has been the total investment on production of biogas so far; and

(d) how many plants have been installed, State-wise till 31st January, 1988 and how many of these are actually functioning at present?

THE MINISTER OF ENERGY AND THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI VASANT SATHE): (a) State-wise evaluation survey studies on performance of family type biogas plants were conducted in